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**Review of: Fabio Seller, *Scientia astrorum: La fondazione epistemologica
dell'astrologia in Pietro d'Abano***

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The church continued to proclaim diocesan peace associations such as the one at Cologne in 1083, during the violent years of the investiture conflict. Peace associations were promoted by powerful noblemen as well, such as the duke of Bavaria in 1094 and the duke of Swabia in 1104. We are fortunate to possess a record of the four-year peace proclaimed by Emperor Henry IV (1056–1106) at Mainz in 1104 to which the bishops, the dukes, and the lesser nobility subscribed. Clergy, merchants, women, and Jews were named as needing protection. The gallows and other forms of capital punishment were not yet the rule since the offenses mentioned, such as robbery, arson, kidnapping, causing bodily harm, and homicide, could still be purged by blinding, losing a hand, scalping, and scourging. But the thrust in the twelfth century was toward capital punishment as population rose and crime did not seem to be diminishing. Crime was coming to be regarded as offensive to the whole of society, not just to the victims and their kindred. Throughout the land, dukes, counts, margraves, ecclesiastical advocates, and powerful town councils pursued the idea that capital executions in public would deter crime. Hence the shift from healing felonies by paying compensation to paying for them on the scaffold.

With enormous diligence the author follows down the centuries types of crime, lynch law, the execution of criminals, and the expertise of hangmen, who also had to know how to decapitate with axe or sword. Garroting and breaking on the wheel were also employed. A nasty method illustrated in a sixteenth-century woodcut shows an unfortunate Jew strung up by his feet between two fierce dogs hung by their hind legs that then bite him to death. A common punishment for women was death by drowning; heretics were usually burned at the stake; and when the witch craze gained momentum in the fifteenth century, burning was the method applied to them as well. In addition to capital executions, inquisition, and torture, the pillory, whipping, condemnation to the galleys, maiming and branding, and prisons with forced labor are discussed in detail.

For centuries the “four high cases” included theft, robbery, murder, and rape, joined later by heresy and witchcraft, all attracting the death penalty. This hierarchy was eventually enshrined in Emperor Charles V’s *Peinliche Halsgerichtsordnung* of 1532. The author gives a sensitive discussion about whether the punishment aspect of “crime and punishment” grew more cruel before the amelioration of the eighteenth century.

Ernst Schubert (1941–2006) was a distinguished medievalist at the renowned University of Göttingen. His magnum opus was *König und Reich* (1979) in which he explained the constitutional structures and methods of late-medieval Germany. Thomas Vogtherr has added an appreciation of him (pp. 289–92) as a scholar thoroughly grounded in regional history and as the director of so many students who appreciated his enthusiasm. Schubert’s enormous talent enabled him to launch out into social and economic history from Frankish times up to the nineteenth century, one result of which we have here. His publisher, the eminent Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, has rightly listed fourteen of his books and articles in the bibliography.

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FABIO SELLER, *Scientia astrorum: La fondazione epistemologica dell’astrologia in Pietro d’Abano*. (Incipit, 4.) Naples: Giannini Editore, 2009. Paper. Pp. xx, 285; 7 black-and-white figures. €20.

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Pietro d’Abano (c. 1250–1316), philosopher and physician, was one of the most versatile scientific thinkers of the late Middle Ages and remained an intellectual authority during the age of humanism. Italian historians have provided a number of monographs on Pie-

tro, beginning with the monumental work by Sante Ferrari (1900), followed by Bruno Nardi (1958), Eugenia Paschetto (1982), Luigi Olivieri (1988), and others. In 1949 Alberico Benedicenti edited *De venenis*, and in 1988 Graziella Federici Vescovini published a critical edition of Pietro's main work on astronomy, the *Lucidator dubitabilium astronomiae*, which she then republished together with the *Tractatus de motu octavae sphaerae* in 1992. The *Conciliator controversiarum quae inter philosophos et medicos versantur*, Pietro's magnum opus on a wide range of subjects, was published in a facsimile edition in 1985.

The book under review focuses on Pietro's contributions to fundamental problems concerning the science of the stars, covering astronomy and astrology. The thematic structure of Pietro's *Lucidator* provides the framework for the chapters of the book, but Seller also covers sections of the *Conciliator* and Pietro's commentary on the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata*.

After a short introductory chapter on the changing views of Pietro and his position in the Padovan Aristotelianism in historiography, the second chapter starts with the synthesis of topics from the *Lucidator*. The first of these concerns the scientific principles of astronomy/astrology and their validity. Pietro begins by rejecting the attack of Ibn Rushd (Averroes) against Ptolemaic astronomy and judicial astrology. First, he analyzes the terms *astronomia* and *astrologia* and, on linguistic grounds, suggests that they are interchangeable, rejecting the distinctions made by other scholars. For the two main parts of the science of the stars he promotes the terms *scientia de motibus* for astronomy and *scientia iudicialis* for astrology in the modern sense. Next, he analyzes the term *scientia* and delineates three notions, two relating to Aristotle's deductive and inductive knowledge and a third, referring to Ishāq al-Isrā'īlī (Isaac Judaeus), in a broader sense without a specific meaning. Further, scientific methods are classified under the terms *demonstratio propter quid* (a priori) and *demonstratio quia* (a posteriori). In the broader division of the sciences *ex opere naturae* Pietro follows Aristotle and Ptolemy in distinguishing metaphysics, mathematics (including astronomy), and physics. Next, pursuing the plan of Abū Ma'shar, he defends judicial astrology against its critics. After a digression on the doctrine of the *universale*, Pietro proclaims that stars are not merely signs but the real cause of events on earth. On the other hand, he denies strong deterministic causation in the region below the sphere of the Moon. Direct divine intervention is admitted, but only for exceptional and rare occasions. The permanent link between the prime mover and the lower spheres accords with Ibn Sīnā's *wāhib al-ṣuwar* (*dator formarum*). The order of the planetary spheres was for a long time a disputed subject, and Pietro shows this to be an example of the evolutionary character of human knowledge.

The third chapter is devoted to the nature and the powers of the heavenly bodies. Pietro tries to harmonize diverse opinions on the nature of the stars distinguishing between *secundum se* and *secundum operationem* in the way that wine itself may be cold but warm in its effect. Next, occult powers are discussed and propounded as empirical facts, like magnetic attraction and specific powers contained within pharmaceuticals. In a similar way, Pietro suggests that stars influence men and that, in medicine, the horoscope of the patient should be the basis of the physician's treatment. Further, Pietro ascribes the generation of animals to the formative power of the stars, taking a position midway between Ibn Sīnā and Ibn Rushd.

In the fourth chapter, astronomical questions concerning movements of the stars are discussed. Pietro begins with general issues concerning the nature of movement; the precession of the sphere of the fixed stars relative to the equinoxes are then identified as secular movement with no retrogradation. Pietro claims to have observed the position of the star Regulus, but the value given is deviant and makes his claim suspicious. Next, the hypothesis of a ninth sphere is defended on the grounds that the highest and noblest sphere

must be simple and, besides, daily rotation cannot have a second movement. Therefore, precession must be located in the second highest sphere. The slow movements of the spheres of precession, Saturn and Jupiter, are held responsible for fundamental changes in human history. In the *Tractatus octavae sphaerae* Pietro argues that during the period from Alexander to Muḥammad constellations of the Zodiac were in a favorable position but that human affairs later deteriorated. The chapter ends by asserting that if the term *sphaera* is correctly understood the correct number of the spheres must be nine.

The fifth chapter presents Pietro's defense of the Ptolemaic system of eccentrics and epicycles, in an attack against natural philosophers. Pietro gives a detailed historical account of discussions in antiquity, based on the commentary of Simplicius on Aristotle's *De caelo*. In this chapter Pietro's opposition to Ibn Rushd, the most prominent critic of Ptolemy, is made particularly explicit.

Several topics in Seller's synthesis of the *Lucidator* and related passages in other works have been treated earlier by Paschetto and Federici Vescovini. However, the book under review adds considerably to what has been done before. Further, it is written in a clear style and is well documented. Despite his importance in history and modern Italian historiography, Pietro d'Abano is not prominent in many modern manuals dealing with the period, including the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (1982–89), *Dictionnaire du moyen âge* (2002), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982), and *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (2010). An English translation of Seller's book would be helpful and could serve as a convenient introduction to at least one of the many topics of Pietro's work.

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M. C. SEYMOUR, ed., *The Egerton Version of Mandeville's Travels*. (Early English Text Society, O.S., 336.) Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xxx, 230 plus color frontispiece and 1 color figure. £60.
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Composed in French, probably around 1360, *The Book of John Mandeville* was one of the most widely circulated and frequently translated medieval works. Organized as a vicarious traveler's tour of the East from Constantinople to the Earthly Paradise, it offered its Latin-Christian readers a copious mix of lore and anecdotes, both legendary and historical. So attractive was this fusion of the familiar and the exotic that the work was soon translated into Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, German, Irish, Italian, Latin, Spanish, and Welsh, besides being redacted twice in its original French. More than three hundred manuscripts are extant. Presumably because the author claimed to be an English knight born and raised in St. Albans, the work took many forms in England, circulating not only in a French version (surviving in twenty-five manuscripts, edited by Christine Deluz, *Le livre des merveilles du monde* [Paris, 2000]) but also in four separate Latin translations (thirteen manuscripts) and four interrelated English prose translations (some forty-four manuscripts, including excerpts and fragments). With the publication of the volume under review, the four Middle English prose renderings are now readily available in scholarly editions by M. C. Seymour, the leading authority on the English manuscripts: the abbreviated Bodley Version, which survives in two manuscripts (EETS OS 253, 1963); the Cotton Version, which survives in a unique copy (Oxford, 1967); and the lacuna-riddled Defective Version, which survives in thirty-three manuscripts (EETS OS 319, 2002). (Seymour also edited the English Metrical Version, an odd, versified redaction surviving in a single manuscript: EETS OS 269, 1973.)

Stylistically, Egerton (which also survives in a unique copy) is easily the best Middle English translation, if not also one of the best medieval *Mandevilles* generally, given that